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ABSTRACT

The Survey of School-Based Gang Prevention and Intervention Programs is a study of approaches used by schools to reduce or prevent gang involvement among schools. Principals in a probability sample of 1,287 schools were asked what they were doing in their schools to prevent problem behavior or to promote a safe and orderly school environment. Responses of 848 principals reported a surprisingly large number of prevention and intervention activities, which were used as a basis for sampling programs for more detailed scrutiny. In a second phase, information was requested for 14 categories of intervention activity from more than 550 schools. Responses represented more than 16,000 students in 310 schools and more than 13,100 teachers in 404 schools. Data suggest that schools are engaging in a great deal of activity to reduce problem behavior generally and to prevent or reduce gang involvement in particular. However, much of that activity is weak and would not be expected to have much of an effect because it fails to use practices known to be effective, is limited in intensity, or is extended to only a few individuals. The quality of school efforts could probably be improved through better training and supervision of intervention activities. Contains 14 tables. (SLD)

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Survey of School-Based Gang Prevention and Intervention Programs: Preliminary Findings

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Survey of School-Based Gang Prevention and Intervention Programs

The Survey of School-Based Gang Prevention and Intervention Programs -- sponsored by the Office for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention -- is a study of approaches used by schools to prevent or reduce gang involvement among schools. An aim of the Survey of School-Based Gang Prevention and Intervention Programs is to describe what and how much is being done in the nation's schools to prevent or reduce gang-related problems. A second aim is to assess how well these prevention and intervention activities are being done. Finally the project also aims to identify and describe promising programs and practices for local schools and communities to consider for adoption—together with guidelines on developing programs. The present report addresses the first two of these aims, and it summarizes the reports of schools on the extent of gang problems in schools and their communities.

Research Strategy

The study of gang prevention and intervention builds on a large scale National Study of Delinquency Prevention in Schools (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1996) sponsored by the National Institute of Justice. It makes use of a national sample of schools and the activities they are undertaking to prevent problem behavior and promote safe and orderly school environments.

To begin the study of what schools are doing, we first attempted to develop a comprehensive understanding of the range of activities recommended by national organizations, technical assistance providers, resource guides and the like. We supplemented information from these sources with information from our experience and files of school-based programs to prevent problem behavior. The result of this discovery phase were descriptions of a large number and variety of activities (Womer, 1997). From these descriptions, we developed a taxonomy or classification of school-based prevention activities (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1997). For example, there was a large class of curricular, instructional or training interventions. There was a category of counseling, psychological, social work,-or therapeutic activities. Planning activities were classified separately, as were architectural arrangements to reduce problem behavior, for example. In all, the classification had 22 major categories (see Table 1).

Table 1
The Taxonomy of Prevention and Intervention Activity

1.	Prevention curriculum, instruction, or training
2.	Behavioral or behavior modification interventions
3.	Counseling/social work/psychological/therapeutic interventions
4.	Individual attention/mentoring/tutoring/coaching
5.	Recreational, enrichment and leisure activities
6.	Referral to other agencies or for other services
7.	Improved instructional methods or practices
8.	Improved classroom management methods or practices
9.	Distinctive culture or climate for interpersonal exchanges – or improvements to intergroup relations or interaction between school & community
10.	Use of external personnel resources in classrooms
11.	Youth roles in regulating and responding to student conduct

12. School planning structure or process — or management of change
13. Security and surveillance
14. Services to families
15. Rules, policies, regulations, laws, or enforcement
16. Provision of information
17. Reorganization of grades, classes, or school schedules
18. Exclusion of weapons or contraband
19. Alter school composition
20. Training or staff development intervention
21. Architectural features of the school
22. Treatment or prevention interventions for administration, faculty, or staff

Our next step was to ask principals in a probability sample of 1287 schools what they were doing in their schools to prevent problem behavior or to promote a safe and orderly school environment using the taxonomy to structure the questions. That is, we asked if there were any instructional activities directed at reducing problem behavior or promoting a safe school, if there were behavioral interventions, counseling, and so on for all of the categories in our taxonomy. We asked principals to name the activities and to provide the names of individuals in the school who could describe the activities further. We were successful in getting responses from 848 schools (66%). Principals reported a surprisingly large number of prevention and intervention activities, which we used as a basis for sampling school-based programs for more detailed scrutiny in a subsequent phase.

In a second phase, we sought information in detailed questionnaires for school prevention and intervention activity in 14 of the 22 categories of our taxonomy. We obtained information about over 3,700 activities from knowledgeable persons (whom we call "activity coordinators" for short) in over 550 schools. In the second phase we also asked principals to provide information about school-wide activities in the remaining 8 categories, to report on the extent of crimes in the school, whether the school has problems with gangs, and on other features of the school. We obtained responses from 636 principals. We sought school cooperation with surveys of students and teachers to obtain reports of problem behavior and participation in prevention or intervention programs, and obtained useful survey data from over 16,000 students in 310 schools and over 13,100 teachers in 404 schools.

To enable an assessment of gang prevention and intervention activity in schools, we modified the questionnaires used in the National Study of Delinquency Prevention in schools so that we could identify activities directed at reducing or preventing gang involvement and added questions about gangs in schools and the schools' communities. The study of school-based gang prevention and intervention also built on efforts we had underway to measure the quality and quantity of program implementation in schools. These measurements will provide one basis for selecting apparently high quality programs for more detailed scrutiny in a later phase of our work.

Extent of Gang Problems in Schools and Communities According to School Principals

We asked principals in the phase 2 survey to report whether gangs were a problem in the school and in the community. Respondents were told, "A 'gang' is a somewhat organized group, sometimes having turf concerns, symbols, special dress or colors. A gang has a special interest in violence for status-providing purposes and is recognized as a gang by its members and by others." They were asked, "Are gangs a problem in the school?" Responses are weighted to account for the sample design and for non-response to produce the estimates presented in Table 2.[1] An estimated 5% of the nation's school's have problems with gangs in school – 5,350 schools nationwide. Higher percentages of middle/junior and high school principals report gang problems in school than do elementary principals. Information about the extent and distribution of school crime is presented elsewhere (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Czeh, Jones & Womer, 1998).

Table 2
Estimated Number and Percentage of Schools for Which Gangs are a Problem in the School

	Number		Percentage	
Group	*N*	SE	%	SE
All schools	5,350	995	5.4	1.0
Level				
Elementary	2,081	812	3.4	1.3
Middle/Jr	1,161	253	8.8	1.9
High	2,108	516	8.4	2.0
Location				
Rural	1,633	537	3.5	1.2
Suburban	1,313	464	5.1	1.8
Urban	2,404	700	8.8	2.5

Note. Differences by location are not significant for reports of gang problems in school. The percentage of schools for which gang problems in school are reported is significantly higher for high schools and middle schools than for elementary schools.

[1]The standard errors reported in this table are calculated using a jackknife (resampling) method that accounts for the complex sampling design. Therefore, they are generally larger than would be standard errors in simple random samples of the same size.

Much higher percentages of principals report gang problems in the communities in which their schools are located, as Table 3 shows. An estimated 36% of schools are in communities with gang problems according to principals, or 34,545 schools nationwide. Community gang problems are reported by a higher percentage of urban principals (65%) than suburban (36%) or rural (19%) principals.

Table 3
Estimated Number and Percentage of Schools for Which Gangs are a Problem in the Community

	Number		Percentage	
Group	*N*	SE	%	SE
All schools	34,545	2,451	36	2.2
Level				
Elementary	21,932	2,226	38	3.3
Middle/Jr	4,531	472	35	3.4
High	8,082	912	33	3.4
Location				
Rural	8,314	1,337	19	2.9
Suburban	9,086	1,176	36	4.1
Urban	17,146	1,723	65	4.4

Note. Percentage of schools for which principals report gangs in the community differs significantly for each location. Percentages reported for gangs in the community do not differ significantly by school level.

Extent of Gang Prevention and Intervention Activity in Schools

The survey provides a basis for a lower bound estimate of the amount of activity schools undertake to prevent or reduce gang involvement. We estimate that during the 1997-98 school year, there were 321,500 distinct gang prevention or intervention activities underway in schools. (See Table 4.) Of these, the most common variety involved the use of prevention curriculum, training, or instruction, with about 51,200 activities of this type underway.

These estimates are derived from questionnaire surveys completed by individuals in schools who were knowledgeable about school activities to prevent problem behavior or to promote a safe and orderly school environment. They are not corrected for underestimation due to survey non-response, so the actual number of gang prevention and intervention activities in schools may be considerably larger—perhaps double the number estimated. Work is continuing to develop the complicated non-response adjustments required for improved estimates. Those interventions or activities for which an objective was to reduce or prevent gang involvement are counted as

gang prevention or intervention activities.

Table 4
Estimated Number and Percentage of Gang Prevention or Intervention Activities in Schools, 1998, by Type of Activity

Activity type	Thousands	%
Prevention curriculum, instruction, training	51.2	15.9
Activity to change or maintain culture, climate, or expectations for behavior	37.7	11.7
Counseling, social work activity	34.0	10.6
External personnel resources in classrooms	26.6	8.3
Security or surveillance	23.0	7.2
Recreation, enrichment, or leisure	22.8	7.1
Services or programs for family members	20.7	6.4
Behavioral programming or behavior modification	20.0	6.2
Intergroup relations, interaction between school and community	18.8	5.8
School planning structure/change process	16.8	5.2
Improvements in classroom organization & management	15.5	4.8
Mentoring, tutoring, coaching	13.8	4.3
Improvements to instruction	12.7	4.0
Youth roles in regulating and responding to student conduct	7.8	2.4
All types	321.5	100.0

Note: Based on 1915 respondents. Estimates are *not* corrected for survey non-response, so actual number of activities may be about twice the tabled estimates.

The second most common kind of activity undertaken to prevent or reduce gang participation is activity to change or maintain a school culture, climate, or expectations for behavior—about 12% of all gang prevention and intervention activities are of this type, with about 37,700 such activities underway in schools. This is followed closely by counseling, social work, psychological, or therapeutic activity, with about 11% of all gang prevention and intervention activities being of this type and about 34,000 such activities underway.

School personnel see a wide range of school-based activities as directed at reducing or preventing gang involvement—ranging from youth roles in regulating or responding to student

conduct (such as peer mediation or student courts) through the use of security or surveillance activities in the school. Activities range from those with a scientific basis such as behavioral programming or behavior modification through activities with little scientific basis such as recreation, enrichment, or leisure activities.

Nature of Gang Prevention and Intervention Activities

Almost all activities directed at reducing or preventing gang involvement are also directed at other related objectives. Table 5 shows that nearly all are directed at problem behavior more generally. Typically, these programs or activities seek to change youths' knowledge, social skills, or academic or employment status. Efforts are less often directed at parental supervision or management of child behavior (56%) or religious beliefs (18%).

Table 5
Percentage of School-Based Gang Prevention Activities Directed at Various Additional Objectives

Objective	%	95% CI	*N*
Student problem behavior	99	98-100	1912
Attitudes, beliefs, intentions, or dispositions	93	91-95	1896
Knowledge about laws, rules, harmful effects of drugs, manners, or other factual information	92	90-94	1890
Social skills and competencies	87	85-89	1864
Academic performance, educational attainment, or employment	85	83-88	1896
Organizational capacity for self management (e.g., strengthening leadership, morale, parent or staff involvement in planning for school improvement)	81	79-84	1850
Rules, norms, or expectations for behavior	80	76-83	1858
Responsiveness to behavior (e.g., applying rewards or punishments in response to behavior)	79	76-82	1844
Opportunities for students to engage in problem behavior in and around school	74	70-77	1844
Learning or job skills	66	63-70	1874
Parental supervision or management of behavior	56	53-60	1864
Religious beliefs	18	14-22	1835

Note. *N* = number of activities in sample (not estimated number of programs).

For the present purposes, we apply the term gang *intervention* program to activity that is directed at youths who are gang members, and we apply the term gang *prevention* program to activities directed at youths who are not current gang members. When activities are classified in this way, the data reveal a different mix of activities for intervention and prevention.

Of programs or activities directed at gang members, 22% involve counseling, social work, psychological, or therapeutic activity. (See Table 6.) There are an estimated 12,100 such school-based intervention programs or activities (not corrected for non-response). A wide variety of approaches to gang intervention are undertaken in schools, however, with 14% (an estimated 7,600 intervention activities nationwide) involving curriculum, instruction, or training, 12% (6,800) involving services or programs for family members, and an approximately equal number involving behavior modification or behavior programming.

Prevention curriculum, instruction, or training is the most common approach to gang prevention, with 22% of the gang prevention activities (an estimated 38,700 programs or activities nationwide) taking this approach. The next most common approach involves a focus on school culture, climate, or expectations as a way to prevent problem behaviors. An estimated 16% (or 27,900) programs or activities are of this nature.

Measuring the Quality of Prevention and Intervention Activity

Because schools were often engaged in a great number of different activities to reduce or prevent problem behavior or promote a safe school environment (14 on average; D. Gottfredson, et al., 1998), we were precluded as a practical matter from obtaining detailed information about all such activities. We sampled within school so that (with few exceptions) we would not burden schools with reporting on more than one of each of the 14 categories for which we prepared detailed questionnaires to assess the nature and quality of implementation.

For each category, we attempted to measure a common core of activity attributes in as parallel a way as was practicable. For example, for each category we devised questions that would allow an assessment of the extent to which what was being done in schools matched the attributes that research and evaluation implies are useful or essential for effectiveness. Generally, we call these attributes *best practices*. Similarly, for each category we sought to measure the *intensity* with which the interventions or activities were applied – determining such things as the number of sessions to which the typical participant is exposed, the duration of the intervention – and we sought to assess the *extensiveness* of application – determining the proportion of students exposed, for example.

This process naturally required the application of judgment, and how we applied the process is best illustrated by example. An example of the attributes examined for activities (or "programs") in our category for prevention curriculum, instruction, or training is shown in Table 7. Instruction or training programs that have been shown to be effective in reducing problem behavior generally include the topics listed in Table 7, and they also generally employ the

Table 6

Percentage of School Based Gang Prevention and Gang Intervention Programs That Are of Each Activity Type

	Gang Intervention [a]				Gang Prevention				
Activity type	%	SE (%)	Thou-sands	SE (*N*)	%	SE (%)	Thou-sands	SE (*N*)	*p*
Counseling, social work, psychological, or therapeutic activity	22	2.8	12.1	1.68	10	1.1	18.3	2.19	.0005
Prevention curriculum, instruction, or training	14	2.3	7.6	1.45	22	1.9	38.7	4.14	.005
Services or programs for family members	12	2.5	6.8	1.45	6	1.0	11.0	1.94	.03
Behavioral programming or behavior modification	12	2.5	6.5	1.48	7	.9	12.2	1.80	.10
Activity to change or maintain culture, climate, or expectations for behavior	11	2.4	5.9	1.49	16	2.1	27.9	4.34	.10
Intergroup relations, interaction between school and community	8	1.7	4.3	1.10	7	1.0	11.7	1.88	
Mentoring, tutoring, coaching, or apprenticeship	6	1.4	3.1	.86	5	.8	8.6	1.58	
Improvements to instructional practices or methods	5	1.8	3.0	1.12	5	.9	9.2	1.68	
Recreation, enrichment, or leisure activities	5	1.4	2.6	.90	10	1.4	17.6	2.56	.009
Improvements to classroom organization and management	4	1.4	2.3	.85	7	1.0	11.9	2.04	
Youth roles in regulating and responding to student conduct	2	.6	.9	.34	3	.6	5.7	1.11	.06

Note: Columns do not add to 100% because informants were not asked to indicate whether or not gang members were targeted by the activity for three categories: security, school planning, and use of external personnel. Activities for which gang member status of target individuals was not reported are also excluded. *p* = probability that the percentages for gang prevention and gang intervention are equal.

[a] Activity targets gang members.

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instructional strategies shown in the lower panel in Table 7. The use of behavioral modeling, role play, practice of the skills taught, and the use of verbal anchors or pictorial cues to remind the individual to display the learned behavior are found in the more effective interventions and not present in interventions that have proven to be less effective. We have assumed that the more of these best practices that are present in an instance of a prevention curriculum, instruction, or training intervention, the more effective it is likely to be. Accordingly, we assign a high score for *best practices (content)* to programs with many of these attributes and a low score to a program with few of these attributes.

Table 7

Measuring Best Practices (Content) – Prevention Curriculum, Instruction or Training

Topics Covered

- Social influence (recognizing & resisting, refusal skills)
- Social problem solving skills (identifying problems, generating alternatives, etc.)
- Self-management (goal setting, self-monitoring, self-reinforcement)
- Attribution training
- Communication skills (interpreting and processing social cues, nonverbal communication, negotiating)
- Emotional control
- Emotional perspective taking

Instructional Strategies

- Behavioral modeling
- Role playing
- Rehearsal and practice of skills
- Use of cues to remind individual to display a behavior

Another example, this time involving best practices for the methods used in interventions involving behavioral programming or behavior modification is shown in Table 8. We assigned a higher score for best practices (methods) to behavioral programs that *always* track behavior, respond to behavior frequently, and apply other practices that make for effective behavioral interventions.

Table 8

Measuring Best Practices (Methods) – Behavioral Programming or Behavior Modification

- Different specific behavioral or educational goals for different individuals or groups
- Always involves a method of monitoring or tracking behavior
- Always tracks behavior for a period of time before attempting to change it
- Always has specific written behavioral goals
- Always makes specific rewards or punishments in response to specific behaviors part of a written behavioral plan
- Tracks and responds to behavior daily or more often
- If student behavior does not change, different reinforcers or a different schedule are sought
- When desired behavior change occurs, rewards are faded (given less frequently) or made more difficult to earn

To provide just one more illustration, Table 9 shows how we assessed the extent to which counseling, social work, psychological or therapeutic activity used best practices (methods). Programs that involve a formal assessment or diagnosis, written treatment goals that are agreed to by the client, and that monitor or track behavior were assigned higher scores than interventions that lacked these characteristics.

Table 9

Measuring Best Practices (Methods) – Counseling, Social Work, Psychological or Therapeutic Activity

- Sometimes, usually, or always makes formal assessments to understand or diagnose the individual or his/her situation
- Always prepares a written diagnosis or problem statement for each participant
- Always develops written treatment goals for each participating student
- Student usually or always agrees to a treatment plan contract
- A contract to implement a treatment plan is always agreed to by the client
- Specific treatment goals for individuals depend on individual needs as indicated by assessment
- When referrals are made, school-based personnel contact the provider to verify that service was provided or to monitor progress
- The counseling or social work plans always include a method for monitoring or tracking student behavior over time

We were unable to specify a set of "best practices" for some categories of interventions. For example, there is not a research base for specifying best practices with respect to either methods or content for recreational interventions. Despite the popularity of recreation, enrichment, or leisure activities among prevention practitioners, the scientific literature does not provide support for any particular set of practices in this area. This was true of content for counseling, mentoring or tutoring, security and surveillance activity, and some other categories. In one case – the use of planning processes or procedures to manage change in the school – we were unable to measure best practices (methods) not because we could not specify what these practices would be, but because our approach to measurement did not work as intended.

An overview of how this approach to measuring program quality, and an example of the application of one measure of intensity, is provided by Table 10 for all the activities in our sample. This table shows the percentage of best practices that characterized the average prevention and intervention activities in schools in each of the 14 categories examined. It shows, for example, that the average instructional program used 81% of best practices for content but only 48% of the best practices for instructional method. And it shows that the average instructional program involved 28 sessions.

Table 10 does not provide all of the aspects of program quality and intensity that we attempted to measure. As noted earlier, we did not have ways to measure some dimensions of quality or intensity for all categories of programs – because the dimension did not apply well to the category, because there was no defensible basis for doing so, or because our approach to measurement did not work as anticipated. Accordingly we devised an approximate method for assessing the overall "adequacy" of activities in each category by combining information from the range of assessments of quality and intensity that was available. Table 11 illustrates how we

Table 10
Examining Program Quality and Intensity Across the Variety of Activity Types

Activity type	% Best practices		*N* sessions
	Content	Methods	
Curriculum, Instruction or Training	81	48	28
Behavior Programming/Modification	62	50	--
Counseling	--	33	15
Mentoring/Tutoring	--	47	47
Recreation	--	--	35
Improved Instruction	62	61	100
Classroom Organization/Management	73	73	--
Change Expectations	--	--	--
Intergroup Relations	--	--	--
School Planning Process	--	??	--
Security & Surveillance	--	77	--
Services for Family	--	--	7
External Personnel in Classroom	--	--	8
Youth Participation in Discipline	--	--	--

approached the assessment of overall program adequacy by illustrating the criteria used for prevention curriculum or instruction and for counseling and similar activities. Wherever possible, an assessment of adequacy included the extent to which best practices were being used, intensity of intervention, and duration of intervention. Notice that for curriculum, instruction or

Table 11
How Was the "Adequacy" of Programs or Activities Judged?

Example: Prevention Curriculum, Instruction or Training
- ☐ One or more persons conducting on a regular basis
- ☐ 70% or more of content "best practices" used
- ☐ 70% or more of method "best practices" used
- ☐ Contains 16 or more lessons
- ☐ Duration is longer than 1 month
- ☐ Occurs at least once weekly

Example: Counseling, Social Work, Psychological or Therapeutic Activity
- ☐ One or more persons conducting on a regular basis
- ☐ 70% or more of method "best practices" used
- ☐ Duration is longer than a month
- ☐ Frequency of student participation is at least weekly

training, we specified six characteristics on which a judgment of adequacy could be made, and for counseling and related interventions, we specified only four aspects. Despite the different numbers of dimensions on which prevention or intervention activities are assessed, it is possible to characterize each activity in terms of the percentage of dimensions judged to be "adequate." The result of this characterization forms the overall "scorecard" shown in Table 12. The table shows that the average program involving curriculum, instruction or training had 57% of the quality and intensity dimensions above the threshold for adequacy, for behavior programming or behavior modification, 47% of dimensions met the threshold for adequacy, and so on.

Table 12
A Score Card on Prevention Activities in Schools: Percentage of Attributes Judged "Adequate"

Activity type	%
Curriculum, Instruction, or Training	57
Behavioral Programming or Behavior Modification	47
Counseling, Social Work, Psychological, or Therapeutic Activity	45
Mentoring, Tutoring, Coaching, or Apprenticeship	57
Recreation, Enrichment or Leisure Activities	51
Improvements to Instructional Practices or Methods	59
Improvements to Classroom Organization or Management	71
Activity to Change or Maintain Culture/Climate/ Expectations for Behavior	64
Intergroup Relations, Interaction Between School and Community	56
School Planning Structure or Process to Manage Change	71
Security or Surveillance	73
Services or Programs for Family Members	42
Use of External Personnel Resources in Classrooms	51
Youth Participation in School Discipline	69

High and Low Quality Gang Prevention Interventions

The application of our assessments of program quality and intensity to the task of identifying potentially effective and almost certainly ineffective practices can be made more concrete by describing the underlying information about gang prevention programs rated low and high in adequacy. Contrasting gang prevention programs involving curriculum, instruction, or training are illustrated in Table 13. School number 2606 scores low on our assessment of adequacy. It uses only 45% of best instructional/training practices with respect to content and 56% of best

Table 13
High and Low Quality Gang Prevention Curriculum, Instruction or Training

Attribute	School 2606	School 2102
Best practices: content	45% of practices used	100% of practices used
Best practices: method	56% of practices used	78% of practices used
Level of use by school personnel	At least one person in the school knows something about it	One or more persons is conducting on a regular basis
Instructor's manual	None	Instructors follow the manual closely in delivering instruction
Frequency of student participation	Two lessons per year	Daily lessons
Responsibility for activity	Principal and business persons deliver and originated	Teachers & counselor deliver, teachers and principal originated
Materials	None	Published
Funding	School district budget, funding for next year doubtful	School district budget, funding for next year certain

Table 14
High and Low Quality Gang Prevention Counseling, Social Work, Psychological, or Therapeutic Activity

Attribute	School 2008	School 2109
Best practices: methods	12% of practices used	88% of practices used
Level of use by school personnel	One or more persons has been trained in it	One or more persons is conducting on a regular basis
Program manual	Not known to person describing program	Yes, and mechanism to ensure that counselors follow manual
Frequency of student participation	5 sessions over course of a month	20 sessions over half a school year
Monitoring	Rarely; referrals not usually followed up	Always; referrals followed up to monitor progress
Responsibility for activity	Counselor and school nurse; originated by state Bd. of Educ.	Counselor & college students; originated by counselors, parents, principal, researchers
Training	4 days, low qual., no follow-up	4 days, high quality, extensive follow-up
Supervision	More than once a year	More than once per month by videotape

practices (method). The "program" includes only two sessions, no materials are involved, and there is no instructor's manual. In contrast the program in school 2102 uses 100% of the best practices (content) and 78% of best practices (method). The activity is conducted on a regular basis, instructors follow a manual closely in delivering the instruction, and published materials are used.

Table 14 illustrates poor and good quality gang prevention or intervention programs involving counseling. In school 2008, only 12% of best practices are used, the individual describing the activity did not know if there was a manual for the activity, it involves 5 sessions, there is rarely follow-up on student behavior or on referrals, there was poor training and there is little supervision. In contrast the counseling activity in school 2109 uses 88% of best practices, there is a manual and a mechanism to ensure that counselors follow the procedures it lays out, the typical client participates in 20 sessions over the course of half a school year, student behavior is monitored and referrals are followed-up, implementers are well trained and supervised frequently. This high quality program is implemented in cooperation with a local college.

What Predicts Program Quality

One aim of our program of research has been to test some specific hypotheses about the predictors of the strength and quality of program implementation (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1996). We have made some preliminary reports of these predictors elsewhere (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1999). Here we will only provide brief highlights of the emerging findings from that research. Among the predictors of the quality and extensiveness of prevention and intervention activity are

- The extensiveness and quality of training
- The level of supervision of the activity
- Principal support for the activity
- The degree of structure or "scriptedness" of the activities
- Local responsibility for *initiating* the activity
- The use of multiple sources of information, including "experts"
- The activity is a part of the regular school program, not an add-on such as an after-school activity.

Summary

Schools are engaging in a great deal of activity to reduce problem behavior generally and to prevent or reduce gang involvement particularly. Much of that activity is weak: It would not be expected to have much of an effect because it fails to use practices known to be effective or it is limited in intensity or is extended to few individuals.[2] It appears likely that the quality of what is done in schools can be improved. Some evidence (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1999) suggests that high quality training and better supervision may be helpful in improving the quality of

[2]Results about program quality in Tables 10 to 12 are for all activities in our sample, not just those directed at gang prevention or intervention. It is unlikely that the general portrait will be changed substantially when we are able to examine parallel data excluding programs not directed at gang prevention and intervention.

prevention and intervention activities. It is possible to assess the quality of prevention and intervention activities, and the resulting assessments may be useful in identifying promising programs for evaluation and for improving the quality and intensity of school-based programs. Our future research will test those applications.

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